



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COUNCILMEMBERS

Courtney Watson, Chairperson
District 1
Mary Kay Sigaty, Vice Chairperson
District 4
Calvin Ball
District 2
Greg Fox
District 5
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes ~~was~~ approved 11/17/08

Monthly Meeting

November 10, 2008

Chairperson Courtney Watson called the monthly meeting to order 8:31 a.m. on November 10, 2008, in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room, 8930 Stanford Boulevard, Columbia.

Members present on call to order: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty Jen Terrasa and Courtney Watson.

Ms. Sigaty reported that she will serve on the Patuxent River Commission's Policy Update Committee.

Ms Terrasa said that Mike Sanderson has been appointed the new Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Counties.

Greg Fox reported that the National Association of Counties will be hosting a special forum on energy in Baltimore on December 10 and 11.

The Chair reported that she would be signing, on behalf of the Council, a letter of endorsement for bond funding requested of the State by the Linwood Center. She complimented staff on the smooth transition from the Howard Building to the swing space. She noted that the Council is mid-way in their recruitment of a new administrator for the Council.

Sheila Tolliver, Council Administrator, updated the Council on various staff activities. She also reported that she has put together an interview committee, who will interview candidates for the vacant Administrative Support Technician position on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Haskell Arnold, County Auditor, updated the Council on the activities of the Audit office. He reported that the Administration has declined to allow the hot line for fraud, waste, and abuse to have an access point on the front page of the County's website. He will work on a roll-out plan with appropriate placement on the Council's website and necessary publicity for the roll-out.

Todd Allen, Director of Human Resources, described his process for tracking positions added to the budget under provisions of Section 305 of the Charter. He said that 10 new positions and 18 firefighter trainees (approved in the budget, but added early) were approved under Section 305 in FY 07; 12 new positions were added in FY 08; and 1 new position has been added to date in FY 09. He said that these numbers do not include reclassifications of employees, which also may have a budget impact. He noted that he has a separate method of tracking those and would be willing to inform the Council at any time about them.

Ray Wacks, Budget Director, updated the Council on the attainment of revenues in the current fiscal year. He reported that there was little new information since last month's report; however, he anticipates that the most significant effect of the failing economy will be realized in FY ~~09~~10 rather than in FY ~~08~~9. He

noted that revenue indicators that are tracked, which seem to foretell revenue patterns, are showing decline in the third quarter. These include transfer tax, development review and building permits, hotel/motel tax, amusement taxes, and recordation taxes. He also reported that the County will learn the revaluation of properties in one-third of the County from the State assessors at the end of December. He anticipates that values will decline.

Ray Wacks further explained that the Administration has directed departments to restrict discretionary spending. They also are reviewing all requests to fill vacant positions and are advising departments that they may need to restructure.

He reported that approximately 50 percent of the county's revenues are derived from property tax; and additional 30 percent come from income tax. He also noted that about 55 percent of expenditures go to the Board of Education, and approximately 10 percent of spending is for debt service on bonds already sold.

Mr. Wacks was invited to return in December with an update.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.